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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Twenty-fifth session
2-20 July 2001

Draft report

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II. Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. As at 20 July 2001, the closing date of the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 168 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with its article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex II to the present report. A list of States parties that have accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention is contained in annex III. A list of States parties that have signed, ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention is contained in annex IV.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee held its twenty-fifth session at United Nations Headquarters from 2 to 20 July 2001. The Committee held ... plenary meetings (...) and its two working groups held 13 meetings.

4. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Charlotte Abaka (Ghana), who had been elected at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee, in January 2001.

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5. Addressing the Committee at its 509th meeting, on 2 July 2001, the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Angela E. V. King, welcomed all members of the Committee to New York and provided information on United Nations events which had taken place since the twenty-fourth session.

6. She stated that the Commission on the Status of Women had focused on two thematic issues: women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS; and gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. She further stated that the Commission had adopted two sets of agreed conclusions on those issues. The Commission had had the benefit of the Committee's statement on racism, which had been adopted during its twenty-fourth session.

7. The Special Adviser also informed the members of the Committee of her recent activities, which included a workshop on "Building Capacity for Mainstreaming Gender in Development Strategies", held in South Africa; the 105th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Havana; the Joint Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality/Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee; a workshop on "Governance, Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality" held at Vienna; and the International Symposium on the Impact of Women's Training on Socio-economic Development, held in Haifa, Israel. She had also participated in Round Table 2 on Human Rights and HIV/AIDS during the recent special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS.

8. The Special Adviser highlighted some of the activities organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women since the twenty-fourth session of the Committee, which included a subregional training workshop held in Auckland, New Zealand on support to preparation of States parties' reports to be submitted to the Committee; a regional meeting to discuss needs-assessment on national machinery for gender equality in African countries, as well as a consultation on enhancing women's participation in peace-building, both of which had been held at Addis Ababa in April; and an expert group meeting held in Mongolia on the situation of rural women within the context of globalization.

9. The Special Adviser informed the Committee that since the closing of the twenty-fourth session, two additional States, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Mauritania, had become parties to the Convention on 27 February and 10 May 2001, respectively, bringing the total number of States parties to the Convention to 168. She also informed the Committee that, on 1 June 2001, Azerbaijan had ratified the Optional Protocol, bringing the total number of States that had ratified or acceded to 22.

10. She stated that she and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women had taken every possible opportunity to encourage ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, as well as acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which had been accepted by only 24 States. In that regard, she reminded all members about the panel discussion to be held during the first week of the session which had been organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of Legal Affairs, entitled "Advancing the

Rights of Women and Children through Treaties: A Multi-lateral Treaty Framework".

11. The Special Adviser indicated that the work of the Committee during the current session would include the consideration of the reports of eight States parties; the continuation of the discussion on the general recommendation on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention concerning temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women; and consideration of issues discussed at the twenty-fourth session, including the practice of human rights treaty bodies with regard to reservations and the Committee's concluding comments. She urged the Committee to consider the input of those of its members who would be attending the upcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

C. Attendance

12. Twenty-one members of the Committee attended the twenty-fifth session. Emna Aouij attended from 2 to 10 July; Göran Melander from 3 to 9 July, and from 16 to 20 July; and Savitri Goonesekere from 9 to 20 July. Asha Rose Mtengeti-Migiro and Regina Tavares de Siliva did not attend the session.

D. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

13. The Committee considered the provisional agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/2001/II/1) at its 509th meeting, on 2 July 2001. The agenda as adopted was as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of the reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
7. Provisional agenda for the twenty-sixth session.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-fifth session.

E. Report of the pre-session working group

14. At its ninth session, the Committee had decided to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at

the following session. The pre-session working group for the twenty-fifth session of the Committee was held from 5 to 9 February 2001.

15. The following members representing different regional groups participated in the working group: Charlotte Abaka (Africa), Savitri Goonesekere (Asia), Ivanka Corti (Europe) and Rosalyn Hazelle (Latin America and the Caribbean).

16. The working group prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the reports of five States parties, namely, Guyana, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Sweden and Viet Nam.

17. At its 511th meeting, on 5 July 2001, the Chairperson of the pre-session working group, Ivanka Corti, introduced the report of the working group (CEDAW/PSWG/2001/I/II/CRP.1 and Add.1-5).

F. Organization of work

18. At its 509th meeting, on 2 July 2001, the Committee decided to take up issues under agenda items 5 (Implementation of article 21 of the Convention) and 6 (Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee) as a working group of the whole. The issues that it decided to consider were working methods, including concluding comments, and ...